

The

# MESSENGER



The monthly newsletter of Messiah Lutheran Church (ELCA)  
8154 Atlee Road, Mechanicsville, Virginia 23111 804-746-7134

SEPTEMBER 2022

## CFFY

(Christian Formation For You)

September is upon us again and with it the return of Sunday school for our children, youth and adults.

We will celebrate the opening of this year's Sunday school year on September 11th with a Rally Day gathering.



Come one, come all to celebrate a return to normalcy, our fellowship in Christ and our commitment to Messiah Lutheran Church.

Children in preschool through Kindergarten will be shepherded by **Lois Schroeder**, Elementary students will be guided by **Wendy DeGraff**, and Middle- and High-School-aged students will meet with **Becky Collie**. **Pastor Ryan** will lead the Adult group. Details to follow!

Looking forward to normalcy! Enjoy the last few days of summer.



Some of us remember, fondly, family game night events that Messiah folks gathered for in past years. Well, here's the opportunity for you and your family and friends to enjoy this again! On Friday, September 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7 pm, tables will be set up in the fellowship hall (and in the narthex, if need be) for games of all kinds to be played. It is suggested that you may bring a favorite game or two and a snack to share, if desired. It's time to get out of pandemic mode and back into fun! See you there.

If you have questions, contact **Marilyn Gunn**.

## A look inside....

- Women's Bible study..... P. 2
- Pastor's message ..... P. 3
- Celebrations ..... P. 4
- Calendar ..... P. 5
- We pray for each other ..... P. 6
- MCEF, Covid protocols ..... P. 7

### *The Messenger*

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**VISIT OUR MLC WEBSITE:**  
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## Your 2022 Church Council And Associate Members

**Teresa Gigante** ..... Council President  
**Anita Philp** ..... Vice-President  
**Heather Williams** ..... Secretary

**Dianne Absher**      **Marilyn Gunn**  
**Roger Schroeder**    **Diana Sondor**  
**Debbie Walker**

### Council Liaisons

Christian Formation ..... **Anita Philp**  
 Evangelism ..... **Heather Williams**  
 Fellowship ..... **Marilyn Gunn**  
 Finance ..... **Teresa Gigante**  
 Property ..... **Roger Schroeder**  
 Social Ministry ..... **Dianne Absher**  
 Stewardship ..... **Diana Sondor**  
 Worship ..... **Debbie Walker**

**Shawn Warmbrod** ..... Treasurer  
**Bill Weaver** ..... Financial Secretary  
**Sue Gilnett, RN**... Parish Nurse

## Women's Bible Study



The Women's Bible Study will be held on  
the 2nd and 4th Wednesday nights in Sep-  
tember at 6:30 pm.  
 (Note: this is a change from 1st & 3rd)

September 14 - Join us for a dessert and  
coffee fellowship time.

September 28 - Bible Study TBA .

At this time we are looking at a few studies  
 to consider. An email will go out in time to  
 get books.

Please join us.

- **Rosalee Cline**

**Pastor Ryan's office hours** are posted for  
 the upcoming week in each Sunday's bul-  
 letin. Schedule an appointment  
 via [messiahmechpr@gmail.com](mailto:messiahmechpr@gmail.com)  
 And 507-360-7276

Pastor Ryan's day off is Monday.

Follow us on



## Pastor's message

As I talked about in my last newsletter article, I spent a week at camp earlier this summer, and I spent some dedicated time reading, pondering, and praying about what it means to be the “E” of the ELCA – evangelical. That is, being rooted in, all about, and proclaiming the gospel. The good news of God in Jesus Christ. You know, that whole Christian thing.

Here's a line (and I can't remember which of the five books it came from) that really stuck with me: we have treasured the gospel in our hearts and failed to open our mouths. That one really got me.

It was related to a discussion of how, in our society, all things religious became part of the private sphere. Most folks don't like having someone else's religious views pushed on them; therefore, keep your own views to yourself, too. That's how our culture has developed over the decades; but there is a problem with that. Because for a lot of Christians, especially Lutherans, one's faith in God has become a closely guarded, private matter. A secret. And if we never talk about God's goodness, God's mercy, God's grace, God's love – well, then it magnifies the difficulty of ever putting into words what one truly believes.

How do we be unapologetically open about our faith in our good and loving God, without offending people or freaking them out? How do we believe more strongly in the reality of the Triune God's love and grace than in the right of others to maintain strict privacy in matters pertaining to faith? Here are some ideas:

First, I'll be trying some things in worship in the year to come – some gospel experiments and holy play – to highlight the *experience* of God's grace and love when we gather together. Things that will stay with

us. Things you can talk about and tell stories about. We come to church to *get* evangelized, week after week, for the main purpose of being able to *go* evangelize, sharing the good news in word and deed, every day.

Second, we'll learn together that our congregation was created by God and exists not just for ourselves, but for the sake of the world. The congregation's purpose is to tell the story of God's love revealed in Jesus Christ, to be living witnesses to the risen Christ. To be a place of promises proclaimed publicly. Evangelism isn't a something a congregation does, something delegated to a committee; evangelizing is our very being. Our heart. It's how we demonstrate our passion for Christ and compassion for the world God created.

Third, we already know what doesn't work in terms of sharing the good news. Even the word, “evangelism” gives folks the hee-bie-jeebies and immediately triggers a “walls-up” response.” It rarely feels like sharing something good. Usually when folks hear the term evangelism, or when someone tries to evangelize, it feels like an effort to make the recipients change. It comes across as telling them what's wrong with them or wrong with what they believe. It comes across as forced conformity. In practice, evangelizing should never be generic or pre-packaged or one-size-fits all. It isn't about adding something new to the lives of others; it's about drawing out what God is already doing in them. When we share the good news, we accompany someone in their journey and, with the Holy Spirit's help, try to lift up how what God does *resonates* with something already in them. We're like human tuning forks helping others to find that internal resonance with the good news.

When we share what God is up to in our lives and in our souls and in our world, we

**Continued on page 4**

## Pastor's message

Continued from page 3

aren't giving a generic report of events. As witnesses, we talk specifically about what we know and have seen and experienced. We bear witness to the ways that God's story has connected with us, resonated with us, and invite others to find connections of their own. Speaking the name of Jesus Christ and telling the story of what God has done for us can become as natural as talking about our families: real stories about real experiences involving people and things we love.

We have treasured the gospel in our hearts and failed to open our mouths. As we kick off another new school and program year at Messiah, may our ears and eyes and hearts be open to what God is up to, and what the people in our lives and communities are longing for. And may our mouths be open in turn with words of promise, hope, and love.

In Christ,

**Pastor Ryan**

Here are the books that these ideas came from (or the books that inspired my own ideas): *The Evangelizing Church: Lutheran Contributions*; *Evangelism in the Inventive Age*; *Chasing Down a Rumor: The Death of Mainline Denominations*; *Forming an Evangelizing People: Perspectives and questions for use in the church*; and *Global Mission in the Twenty-First Century*.



- 2 **Amy Delph**
- 8 **Dean Gustafson**
- 8 **Beth Carpenter**
- 10 **Sheila Whirley**
- 23 **Kirsten Combs**
- 24 **Roberta McMillen**



- 3 **Anita (& Mark) Philp**
- 17 **Daren & Valerie Williams**
- 28 **Bill & Chrisann Hatfield**
- 30 **Jean (& John) Martin**

If you would like YOUR birthdays & anniversary included in the newsletter, please call **Davina** (746-7134) or send an email to [messiahmech@gmail.com](mailto:messiahmech@gmail.com).

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## Evangelism quote

“Prayer is crucial in evangelism: Only God can change the heart of someone who is in rebellion against Him. No matter how logical our arguments or how fervent our words, our words will accomplish nothing unless God's Spirit prepares the way.”

- Billy Graham

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September 2022						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

- 1 Fall cleaning kickoff
- 4 9:15 am All Souls Worship Service  
(Sanctuary)  
10:45 am Messiah Lutheran:  
Worship Service
- 5 Labor Day - Office Closed
- 7 9:00 am PAL Group
- 11 Rally Day  
9:15 am All Souls Worship Service  
(Sanctuary)  
10:45 am Messiah Lutheran:  
Worship Service
- 14 6:30 pm Women's Bible Study
- 18 9:15 am All Souls Worship Service  
(Sanctuary)  
10:45 am Messiah Lutheran:  
Worship Service
- 21 9:00 am PAL Group  
6:15 pm Council Meeting
- 22 First day of Autumn
- 23 7:00 pm Family Game Night
- 25 9:15 am All Souls Worship Service  
(Sanctuary)  
10:45 am Messiah Lutheran:  
Worship Service
- 28 6:30 pm Women's Bible Study
- 30

**[ Watch the messiahmech.com website and Facebook pages for any updates and changes ]**

\* Worship services will be broadcast LIVE on our Facebook page and recorded for later access via our YouTube channel. (May be subject to change)

## Letter jockeys:Reminder

Sign up for a month or whatever you can do. Letters are in the containers in tall cabinet in fellowship hall on the top of container will have suggestions that will fit in the space. We would like the sayings to be changed every couple of weeks. After you have changed sign, take a picture and send to **Donna Shaw** at dmshaw70@gmail.com

Any questions, you can contact **Linda Mahovtas** at lmahovtas@verizon.net



## More hands make less work

To get ready for Rally Day, we're going to clean! On Thursday, September 1, members of the Evangelism Team will begin to clean the church for Rally Day. Please feel free to come anytime during the day to give a hand. If that day doesn't work for you, there will be a list of tasks on the bulletin board that you can choose to do at a time that fits your schedule. Just make sure to check the task(s) off the list when you're done! A reminder email was sent out that provides more details along with the tasks to be accomplished.

Any and all hands are welcomed!

## We pray for each other:



**LeRoy Albertson; Debbie Anton; Jim Berg; Annette Buckholtz; Bruce Carr; Johnnie Collie; Adam Dworak, Sr.; Bonnie Dworak; Ted Ford; Jackie Garbett; Steve & Sue Gilnett; Karen Jones; Abby Schroeder; Ruth Schroeder.**

## We pray for our extended family and neighbors:

**Anton Family; Marcel Cayouette**, friend of Sally & Charlie Bennett; **Dwayne Collie**, Johnnie's brother; **John Davis and Family**, friends of the Whirleys; **Griffen Deere**, brother of Leroy Deere; **DiGrazia family; Don Gresco**, former member of Messiah; **Ethan Hamilton and family; Brenda Holcomb**, Sally & Charlie Bennett's cousin; **Family and Friends of Guenter Irmen**, friend of Erna Jung; **Joan Laudig**, Susie Weaver's mom; **Lee Nester**, friend of Karen Morris; **Tim Schroeder**, Roger's nephew; **Mary Streesman; Melissa Villegas**, niece of the Shaw's; **Susen Weaver**, daughter-in-law of the Weavers; **Gayla**, friend of Rosalee Cline; **Gayle**, friend of the Whirleys; **Harry**, child of friend of the Andersons; **Jenna**, niece of Steve Gilnett; **John**, friend of Karen and Michael Morris; **Tyson**, grandson of Erna Jung.

**Our veterans, their fellow soldiers & their waiting families; All law enforcement, firefighters and first responders; The people and pastor, Rev. Katherine of All Souls Episcopal & our shared ministry; All those affected by COVID, in all areas of life, and for a way forward; All those impacted by acts of violence, at home and abroad; All who**

**travel; All those persecuted in any way for their faith in Christ, especially in Jordan, Dem. Rep. of the Congo, Mozambique; and Turkey.<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Open Doors World WatchList 2022  
<http://www.opendoorsusa.org>

**Please contact Davina with names that need to remain on the list. Email her at [MessiahMech@gmail.com](mailto: MessiahMech@gmail.com) or phone 746- 7134 with your requests.**

## PAL (Patches and Love)

Upcoming meeting dates: Wednesdays September 7th and 21. We meet at the church from 9 to noon.

We will continue to assemble quilt squares for quilt tops to make Lutheran World Relief quilts. Also, we are making lap quilts (45" x 45") for local distribution.

We will continue to accept donations of clean cotton fabrics and large pieces for backing and items that can be used for batting (ex. Clean flannel sheets). Also, we would gladly accept monetary donations for those who would like to contribute to purchase needed materials.

If you would like to join us, please do. There is no quilting experience needed. Come. Gather. Share your time to put together the quilts with PATCHES AND LOVE.

- Cheryl Griffis



**Join Messiah on Facebook!**



## MCEF notes

July was a busy month providing food and clothing to 121 households in Mechanicsville, financial assistance to 7 families and 114 rides for seniors.

The John Marshall Alumni Band has disbanded, the patriotic concert annually held on Sept 11 will not take place. MCEF thanks them for their dedicated service.

Current food needs include canned tomatoes, canned meats such as tuna and chicken and soup. Linen closet needs include towels and queen sized sheets.

Fall and winter clothing is being accepted, we ask that donations be clean, current styles and in good condition. Donations are accepted the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month, 2:00 - 3:30.

Many thanks to all who donate in any way to help our neighbors in need.

- **Gladys Hubert**

## MCEF needs Volunteers to help seniors in Mechanicsville:

MCEF needs volunteer ride coordinators and drivers for seniors and disabled persons who can no longer drive themselves. MCEF's Senior Rides program helps our seniors and disabled stay in their homes by giving rides to medical appointments, to the grocery store or to do personal business. Ride coordinators schedule the rides and inform the drivers of the needed rides. Volunteer drivers use their own vehicles and choose the rides to fit their schedule. Drivers are reimbursed \$.50 per mile to offset the cost of gas.

If you can share a few hours each month and have a desire to help our seniors please contact MCEF Senior Rides at (804) 357-9360, or by email at: [Office@4mcef.com](mailto:Office@4mcef.com).

## COVID protocols update

The Messiah Church Council feels confident that we no longer need to require or strongly encourage mask-wearing or social distancing unless an individual has a compromised immune system or other significant risk-factors. Anyone is still welcome and encouraged to wear a mask if that makes them feel more secure or comfortable, or if their doctor recommends them to do so. The new CDC guidance states that if someone is exposed to COVID, they should mask for 5 days. If someone develops symptoms, they should still get tested and quarantine if positive. Common sense and Christlike compassion should still guide all of our decisions.

The Church Council will continue to keep abreast of any further information and guidance. If things should take another turn for the worse (more contagious or deadly strains or anything of that nature), we know how to handle it, and we will get through it together. We are cautiously optimistic, though, that the worst may be behind us.

As far as the restrictions we've had in our worship practices, we can resume having Communion at the altar rail right now. We will begin adding liturgical singing back into our services on September 11th.

Any questions, concerns, or feedback, please let **Pastor Ryan** or any Church Council members know.

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Mechanicsville VA 23111



September 2022

**Messenger**

page 8



Love is the spark that kindles the fire of compassion. Compassion is the fire that flames the candle of service. Service is the candle that ignites the torch of hope. Hope is the torch that lights the beacon of faith. Faith is the beacon that reflects the power of God. God is the power that creates the miracle of love.

—William Arthur Ward

The DEADLINE for the  
**October 2022**  
edition of  
***The Messenger*** is  
**Sunday, September 18th**  
(Please contact me,  
if you need a “grace period”)

Please call **Susie Weaver** with your  
submission, hand me a written  
submission OR email  
[susiew51@comcast.net](mailto:susiew51@comcast.net)

**Check out Messiah’s videos on**

